SITUATIONAL APPROACH TO ENGLISH TEACHING (2)

(Some Grammatical Considerations)

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'In order to know a foreign language, it is obvious that we have to know its grammar.'[1]

1. Preface

Part I of this series[2] discusses grammatical items as they are inadequately utilized by English textbooks currently in adoption by Japanese high schools, in terms of gradation, selection and arrangement. Since language teaching, be it situational or structural approach or otherwise, should be and is more or less based on structure-centered principles,[3] teaching materials may as very well be under constant examination from grammatical point of view.

'The scheme by which this arranging (of semantic units) is done in a language is called the "grammar" of the language.'[4]

Being grammatically correct in usage has always been and is *the* measuring rod by which to judge the relevancy or irrelevancy of each and every teaching item as it is presented to an English class. English teachers at large, however, are from time to time confronted with difficulty in determining what sentences are grammatically correct and what sentences are not. Randolph Quirk remarks:

'Our present position, then, as regards English teaching is virtually that our teachers live in a no-man's land between the discredited old grammar and the unwritten new.'[5]

'One has nothing but sympathy for teachers over the past few decades who have heard linguistics convincingly damn the "old grammar" and offer nothing but general principles in its place—offer, that is, no codification of the "new grammar" in any form which could enable the harrased teacher to take into the classroom.'[6]

2. What Is Correctness

W. Somerset Maugham once commented upon H.W. Fowler, saying:

'He had a sound feeling that idiom was the backbone of a language.... He was no slavish admirer of logic and was willing enough to give usage right of way through the exact demesnes of grammar.'[7]

Maugham, being a great author yet a layman in linguistics, here passes a healthy judgment regarding what is important in determining the grammar of a language.

'Correct English does not exist in any absolute sense. Correct English is English that goes off well in the situation in which it is used...'

'We must remember that grammar is a description of how things are said, not of how they should be said.'[8]

The last quoted is but one of the typical remarks of modern linguists upon the subject under discussion. Others are also quoted to say:

'In these expressions of the scientific view there is also a clear affirmation of the fundamental principle of the attitude that usage or practice is the basis of all the correctness that can be in language.'[9]

'We assume...that there can be no "correctness" apart from usage and that the true forms of "standard English" are those that are actually used in that particular dialect. Deviation from these usages are "incorrect" only when used in the dialect to which they do not belong.'[10]

Note what Nelson Francis observes:

'We often hear it said that a certain person "uses good grammar", or that a given expression is "bad grammar".... They are judgments as to the appropriateness and social acceptability of individual expressions in a given dialect. Linguists do not use the term *grammar* in this sense; they treat such matters as, for instance, the acceptability of "It's me" in standard spoken American English as a point of usage.'[11]

Whether an utterance or expression is grammatically relevant or not, therefore, depends largely on the circumstances in which it is delivered.

'It assumes that the most important facts concerning any words, forms, or constructions of language are the circumstances in which they are usually used, because these words, forms or constructions will inevitably suggest these circumstances.'[12]

Seeing that usage alone establishes and endorses the grammar of a language, as is pointed out by the above-quoted authorities, and that usage should and does change from age to age, it follows that grammar also must of necessity change with the lapse of time.

Such teaching materials as are in current use in English classes at Japanese schools, it is advisable, should be examined anew by the 'usage' criterion, which the writer attempts even within a very limited demesne of grammar which is treated in this paper; a few grammatical items will be under examination in order to clarify some changing aspects of the language in terms of structural devices.

This paper tentatively examines grammatical items on four structural levels respectively: 1. word level; 2. phrase level; 3. modal level; 4. complex sentence level (relatives). These are but a few of the numerous aspects of the language. It may be extremely hastily irrevant to judge the whole language merely by what one observes of some specimens within a limited grammatical domain. Suffice it, however, to consider only these items for the present express purpose, for they may even lead to still more heuristic approaches to the better understanding of English grammar.

3. The MUST of *Supposition* vs. the HAVE-TO Structure (An Examination on Word Level)

'Must'

*To be reasonably expected to; is bound to.

It must have stopped raining by now.

She must be at least forty.

*To be inevitably certain to.

Man must die.

*To be sure to; be certain to.

He must know that![13]

Very few grammarians in the United Kingdom and the United States alike seem to regard the *must* as is defined above, as noteworthy. A.J. Thomson and A.V. Martinet, however refer to this *must* in their joint work entitled *A Practical English Grammar:*

'*Must* + *Infinitive* (without *to*) can express deduction.

That is an enormous animal; it must weigh a ton.'

'The past form of this construction is *must* + *perfect infinitive.*

Hercules killed two snakes that crawled into his cot. He must have been a very

strong baby.'[14]

According to Paul Roberts:

'*Must* may also express likelihood.
It must be time to milk the goats.
It must have been a meteor.'[15]

This structure, on the other hand, is usually given importance by Japanese authors of conventional English grammar as well as by English grammar textbooks for Japanese high school use; which fact may account for the tendency that the Japanese attach unduly too much weight to the structure, whereas English native speakers seem to be less conscious of the differentiating factor,[16] so that, it appears, they frequently use the deductive *must* and the *have-to* structure interchangeably. This the Japanese grammarians of English, in their turn, seem utterly to ignore or, at least, be unaware of. The question may remain as regards whether there should actually be so clear-cut contrast between the two structures under consideration as is claimed by the Japanese grammarians at large.

'In both forms (i.e. *must* and *have-to*), however, there is always present the idea of a constraint of some kind, so that there is a unity of meaning in all the examples (of the forms).'[17]

The above-quoted remark points to the seeming inevitability for the two structures concerned to replace each other in various environments including 'deduction'. This paper does not deal with *must* replacing *have-to*; suffice it, for the present purpose, to discuss the *have-to* structure as it is used in place of *must,* which latter case is more frequently observed than *vice versa.* Listed below are the specimens of the kind quoted from modern fictions and novels written by British and American authors.

a. Present Tense

'He stopped and picked up a pair of glasses. "These *have to be* yours." '[18]

'He added coldly, "And it's going to work. It *has to.*" '[19]

b. Preterite Tense

'It was impossible for six airplanes...not to have left even a track of their existence. Something *had to be* out there in the water.'[20]

'So the Devil's Triangle *had to be* the single most vicious area in the world for unpredictable, violent, lethal water.'[21]

'M-Mother began the agonizing business of pulling out. She flexed under the fearful stresses. She *had to* collapse. She *had to* fall apart in the air. Her wings *had to buckle* and *rip away*. They *had to*. (But they didn't)'[22]

'If there was no internal contact, then it *had to be* Harper.'[23]

c. *Had To* + Perfect Tense

'Rhinemann's men *had to have been* alarmed.'[24]

'It *had to have happened* within the past five or six minutes, thought David.'[25]

d. Modal + *Have Had To* + Perfect Tense

'He *would have had to have been* lucky to hit as he did, if he had only 4.8 seconds to fire the shot.'[26]

'There *would have had to have been* a container of some kind, something to hold the stuff that did it, and they didn't find one.'[27]

e. Continuitive Form

'We *were having to* buy our own food and money was already short.'[28]

'I *kept having to* tell him to turn it (the radio) down.'[29]

The above-listed specimens, limited as they are in number, suggest the over-all tendency that the *must* structure is in the process of replacement by the *have-to* structure, which furnishes inflections for any tense whereas the former, *i.e. must*, has but one form. The *have-to* structure may totally dethrone *must* in time except for some cases where the two stuructures retain their respective intrinsic differentiating features as in: You must go./You have go, *etc.*[30]

4. The *For* + Accusative + Infinitive Structure *etc.*
(An Examination on Phrase Level)

This structure seems to be enjoying at present more popularity and more versatile use by native speakers than has ever been affirmed by traditional grammarians.

Sanki Ichikawa comments upon this specific structure from historical and functional viewpoint in his *Studies in English Grammar*, in the preface to which he observes to the effect that:

> 'The twenty papers comprising the first chapter of the book deal with such grammatical features as have come to my attention in the course of reading English books, which features have not yet been sufficiently clarified by works in English grammar hitherto produced and read in this country.'[31]

The above-quoted statement still applies with much truth to the present status of the English teaching field in Japan; this particular structure under discussion, for instance, does not receive as much attention as it duly deserves, it appears, despite attempted clarification by a number of current Egnlish grammar textbooks, one of which is quoted below:

> 'In the "*For* + Object + *To*-Infinitive" structure, the "*For* + Object" denotes the sense subject of the following infinitive as in:
>
> a. It is wrong *for him to say such a thing.* (Noun Use)
> b. It is time *for you to go to bed.* (Adjective Use)
> c. Open the door *for the cat to go out.* (Adverbial Use)'[32]

Paul Roberts makes a remark concerning the structure in question in his *Understanding Grammar*:

> 'When the infinitive with subject functions otherwise than as the direct object of a verb or verbal, it is introduced by *for*: Subject of a Verb:
>
> *For him to think of such a thing* is madness.
>
> It is madness *for him to think of such a thing.*
>
> Appositive:
>
> Mother's last request, *for Livermore to study law,* cannot possibly be complied with.
>
> Adjective:
>
> That's a matter *for Gilroy to decide for himself.*
>
> Adverb:
>
> I was not willing *for Linda to go alone.*
>
> 'Note that in the examples given it would be impossible to omit the introductory *for*. *For* serves to indicate that the substantive following is subject of an infinitive....'[33]

> 'It is probably simpler, however, to say that *for* is not here a preposition at all, but a subordinate conjunction that introduces the phrase. Compare these:

For Sam to marry Susie would be surprising.
That Sam should marry Susie would be surprising.

We have seen elsewhere that the infinitive phrase with subject is often the equivalent of a *that* clause. In our example *for* seems to bear relation to *Sam to marry Susie* that the conjunction *that* bears to *Sam should marry Susie.* Consequently it is reasonable to construe *for* as a subordinate conjunction.'[34]

R.A. Hudson discusses the occurence of *for*:

'Turning now to the rules for the conjunction *for*, this is found only if the noun-clause both is infinitival (with *to*) and contains SUBJECT; under these circumstances, it is obligatory, unless one of two extra factors is present, etc.'[35]

Peter S. Rosenbaum examines this structure in *The Grammar of English Predicate Complement Construction*, which deserves notice. He, however, comments:

'Progress in this area will no doubt depend upon distinctions far subtler than those which we were led to identify by the criteria for differentiating underlying structures proposed in this study.'[36]

Quoted below are the specimens from modern writers of the structure under discussion, some of which appear to supercede the information hitherto supplied by our grammarians upon the subject:

a. Noun Use

'*For it to be so* would mean that he had broken silence.'[37] (Subject)

'The normal procedure would have been *for the Hecate to turn to starboard,* too.'[38] (Complement)

'The plan was *for the informant to station himself* at the entrance.'[39] (Complement)

'It remained *for Leary to reflect* precisely the poisonous atmosphere.'[40] (Complement)
cf. It remained *to be seen* what had actually had been done.

'I'd hate *for it to be you.*'[41] (Object)

'She hadn't meant to go with him. He hadn't meant *for her to.*'[42] (Object)

b. Adverbial Use

'He gestured *for her to hold her words* for a moment.'[43]

'She waved *for me to sit down.*'[44]

'Pat...nodded *for me to follow him* back to the car.'[45]

Hudson discusses differentiating factors between such a pair of sentences as:

'We all hoped *for it to stop raining.*'
'we all wanted *it to stop raining.*'[46]

Also note:

'Those same kids would be screaming *for him to hurry up* and *get to where the trouble was.*'[47]

'In order *for the motorcade to pass it,* they'd have to make a jog right on Houston Street.'[48]

c. Apposition

'I passed the word *for him to get in somebody else* if he wanted to assign a tail to be sure of it, but *for him to hold his position.*'[49]

d. After Such Verbs as *Say*

'Keep *says for you to take off.*'[50]

'Martin *says for you to go under cover.*'[51]

This structure inevitably leads to still another interesting structure: the '*say* + *to* infinitive' structure, which is to be regarded as the indirect speech equivalent to a sentence including a command like: '*I said, "Go."*' The '*say* + *to*-infinitive' structure has been and is almost completely ignored by conventional grammar, especially more so at secondary school level. Attempts, however, are being made to compensate for its absence, with such other devices as function in its place.

e.g.
He *said, 'Keep the floor clean.*" (Direct Speech)

He *ordered the store to be kept clean.* (Indirect Speech)

The above-mentioned device is not applicable if the structure lacks the object of the verb in the indirect speech, as in such a sentence as:

He said, 'Hurry up.'

This is where the '*say* + *to*-infinitive' structure comes in, specimens of which are hereby given below:

'I *said to bring a big long-handled spoon.*'[52]

'He *says to interrupt you.*'[53]

'So he calls up and *says to bring up a case of rye,* too.'[54]

'McFee *said to lend it* to you.'[55]

'He *said to take anything* we could in the way of company books.'[56]

'The tipster *said to do it.*'[57]

'Then suddenly he *said,* in a mildly annoyed tone, *not to bother,* a wing had just broken away.'[58]

cf. 'I *asked to speak* to the manager.'[59]

Another structure of the same category: '*think* + *to*-infinitive' structure seems to be more frequently used than the '*be thinking of* + gerund' structure.

'You don't *think to pack your bag* in case.'[60]

'He *thinks to work out* on my beam before he comes in to attack.'[61]

'So the Germans *thought to fix him* with that old game.'[62]

'"I don't like being followed." It was all Alex could *think to say.*'[63]

'And they never *thought to bleach their pussies.*'[64]

'I noted she had *thought to have an ice bucket and booze and glasses* on a tray.'[65]

The structures above discussed ought to be given due attention in classroom teaching, in view of their wide and popular use among the native speakers of the language.

5. *Subjunctive Past* Replacing *Subjunctive Past Perfect*
(An Examination on Modal Level)

A conventional definition:

'Because the verb in the contrary-to-fact clause points to the present or future, the past perfect must be used if the actual time of the clause is past. Compare:

If he were ready (now), we could go.
If he had been ready (then), we could have gone.
If he turned thief, his mother would be heart-broken.
If he had turned thief, his mother would have been heart-broken.'[66]

Note the following specimens which appear in present-day English, both British and American, too frequently to be treated as mere solecisms, defying the seemingly established grammatical rules.

'If you *weren*'t in the air when that happened, you could never have gotten off the ground.'[67]

'"Smell anything?"
"If I *did*, I would have reported it."'[68]

'It would have been great if I *didn't make* the call.'[69]

'If he *sounded* off, I'd have had it.'[70]

'If he *had* the chance, he would have bumped me.'[71]

The knowledge that the *but-for* and the *without* structure are serviceable in place of both the subjunctive past and the subjunctive past perfect may lead to the analogy that the subjunctive past also is capable of playing the role of the subjunctive past perfect, if the verb in the conditional clause functions properly to signal the time element and indicate whether the statement refers to the present or the past status of things.

The writer, however, does not rashly recommend this structure in question to be

presented to classroom teaching as an established grammatical rule, notwithstanding his ingrained suspicion that it may betoken a general direction of change the language will take in the long run in terms of subjunctive structures.

Consider the specimens listed below, in which the *if-not-for* (meaning *but for*) structure with its variations likewise applies to the subjunctive past as well as to the subjunctivepast perfect.

'*If not for* Miss Morgan, you would be dead and in your grave today.'[72]

'I'd never have noticed **only for* having some training at this sort of thing.'[73]
(**only for* means *if not for*.)

The above argument may also help explain why *was* is used in the same capacity as the subjunctive past perfect *had been* as in:

'If it *was* a wop, he would've been good for something.'[74]

'I would have put in my papers already, if it *wasn't* for Inspector Delise.'[75]

The indicative mood appears also in the *as-if* clause:

'It feels as if the inside of me *has turned* ice.'[76]

6. Relative Pronoun
(An Examination on Complex Sentence Level)

a. *That*

Jespersen remarks that the relative pronoun *that* is used only restrictively, and not continuatively.[77]

Tom has found the key *that* you lost yesterday.
Tom has found the key, *which* is now on his desk.

All the soldiers *that* were brave pushed on.
All the soldiers, *who* were all of them brave, pushed on.

Note, however the following specimens:

'She would cause him no trouble, of *that* he was certain.'[78]

'They would find nothing, of *that* Barak Moor was certain.'[79]

'She...going on about a speech made by Mr. Markezinis, *that* she said was a treason.'[80]

It also interests us to notice that *that* sometimes replaces *what* as is observed in the sentence quoted below:

'I was wondering if there is anything that you know of **that* happened lately.'[81]

(*The *that* may be interpreted as a relative pronound with *anything* as antecednet, which the context obviously denies.)

b. *Which*

The relative pronoun *which* used in the initial position:

'Cortes called it Calida Fornex, the *Hot Oven*. *Which* was about all it was.'[82]

'What you had to do is perfectly simple. *Which* is not how it was at Stavanger Airport the next morning.'[83]

The relative pronoun is deleted as follows:

'It's just a place where the babes can stay with no question, is all.'[84]

'Shall we get to the item you say is vital?'[85]

An antecedent may be deleted as in:

'I'm partial about *who* calls me a son of a bitch.'[86]

c. *Who*

It is an established grammatical rule that *who* often replaces *whom* as in:

Who are you talking about?

More examples of the kind:

'It's not what you do but *who* you know that counts.'[87]

Who replaces *whom* following a preposition:

'The man for *who* Ferguson worked was the man Fenton needed to identify.'[88]

There seems to be confusion even emong the native speakers of the language as to the correct usage of *who* and *whom* as is suggested by the following quotation:

'"Cleo *who*?"
"It's *whom*, ain't it?"'[89]

d. *What*

What is frequently a vulgarism replacing *whom, that, etc.*

'Creta wasn't one *what* makes friends fast.'[90]

'Come to think of it, them *what* had brief cases been here pretty much before.'[91]

'Me, a guy *what* likes women.'[92]

'That nutty little Jansen kid *what*'s always stealing rides in cars.'[93]

7. Conclusion

'The grammarians noted one apparently universal linguistic fact: *All languages change.*'[94]

Such grammatical structures as have so far been observed of the quotations from modern authors occur so frequently as to cease to be mere solecisms or grammatical exceptions which are usually labeled as ungrmmatical or unorthodox. They do however seem suggestive of the general direction or tendency the language is taking in the course of change which a language inevitably undergoes.

It may be too rashly irrelevant, it is admitted, for our textbooks to adopt and use all these grammatical changes hastily and indiscriminately; which information, nevertheless, may prove helpful to an English teacher to gain keener insight into the language which is not a dead language but a living one constantly on the move.

It should therefore be advisable to select such language materials for classroom presentation as show as modern usage of the language as possible, with its changing aspects kept well in view.

The so-called prescriptive grammar is very often informative, it is never to be denied, so long as the furnished information is utilized in a right manner.

> ' We also know that there is no need to discard traditional grammar as useless. Far from it, we want, rather, to build upon the theoretical foundation of traditional grammar.'[95]

Realization is forced upon a teacher of languages that ever-changing phases of language at times seem so very tricky that he should be constantly on guard against the pitfall of misconceptions about language change, by maintaining an unerring perspective of linguistic facts he is from time to time confronted with, as well as provide his students with as appropriate and upto-date information on the language/languages he teaches as he possibly can.

This is what the situational approach, or any other approach, to English teaching ought to consider in its attempt to present better teaching materials. The situation in which the materials are presented is no more than a mere setting where language activity is carried on by means of language structures of diverse levels. This is where literature comes in by furnishing as it does a fruitful field of raw language materials to prove and/or disprove grammatical issues in dispute, supplemented and endorsed by spoken language in its turn.

> ' Grammatical ideas and techniques will be employed more extensively in composition and literature. In turn more of grammar teaching will make use of the data and discoveries in these areas.'[96]

The above statement clarifies one of the main reasons why this paper has sought its data on the grammatical structures under discussion, out of modern writers who are at present enjoying great popularity both at home and abroad, for :

> 'A teacher should be able to distinguish between those textbook rules that are based on syntax, and are therefore objective, from those that are based on usage, and are therefore a matter of subjective judgment.'[97]

Traditional grammar has been frequently and unduly criticized, notwithstanding its remarkable contribution to English teaching, for being unscientific and outdated in terms of grammatical principles and datum-handling procedures. Grammar is comprised of sets of rules which should really be more than :

> 'A mere collection of rules but a system into which the rules fit in a significant and revealing way.'[98]

The writer has no intention whatsoever to disregard modern linguistics as irrelevent to language teaching. It, however, is rightfully assumed that the utility of traditional grammar is still to be maintained in modern English teaching by feeding it with the latest linguistic data possibly available, as new wine is poured into an old bottle, insomuch as it hardly is the case with teaching modern English grammar that:

> 'No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.'[99]

Such is the viewpoint this paper assumes in proclaiming the necessity of an overall examination of such grammatical items as are currently adopted by textbooks for use in Japanese high school, and probably college also, English classes; through which attempt, it is anticipated, the English teaching will be improved and enhanced in terms of practicability, applicability and teachability.

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